

# THE FREE PRESS OPINION

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## Inquest won't have answers

**M**arjean Fichtenberg's quest for an examination into why her son died at the hands of a known violent offender, who walked away from a halfway house, has been long and difficult. She expects to find answers as to how something like this could happen but we're afraid she's going to be disappointed. The first witnesses have done little to assuage the concerns of a parole board system that lets people like Paul Butler out into the community.

Former National Parole Board member Wilson Seig comes clean and admits mistakes were made after Butler stabbed Dennis Fichtenberg to death; but no one is really prepared to admit Butler should never have been in a halfway house.

The RCMP muddled the waters with their attempt to describe the difference between an informant and an agent. And their claims Butler's parole was the sole prerogative of the Parole Board, with no influence coming from the police, doesn't ring completely true.

With luck, Mrs. Fichtenberg will be allowed to properly put her son to rest. She'll know why and how her son had to die. She'll have the satisfaction of seeing the people who screwed up pay the price, albeit not the price paid by 25-year-old Dennis Fichtenberg.

And even if a mother's questions are answered, the inquest will inevitably raise more questions – the main being whether this can happen again.

Unfortunately, it probably will. The Coroner's Inquest was ordered by provincial Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh but the Parole Board is a federal responsibility. As former parole board member Mr. Seig points out, the chances of the bureaucrats taking responsibility and changing the rules are slim and none.

And that means someone else will die.

### THE PRINCE GEORGE FREE PRESS

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ITEM: TRUDEAU SENDS A  
POINTED MESSAGE TO  
LUCIEN BOUCHARD.

OUCH!



## What is harassment?

**I**f the purpose of theatre is to provoke discussion, then Oleanna definitely succeeded. Putting aside the playwright's misogynist tendencies, Oleanna raises the issue of sexual harassment and makes people ponder what it means. And whether men actually have anything to say on the matter.

The whole debate can be summed in the female character's declaration that the man's feelings or intentions are irrelevant. "It's what I feel," she says.

And therein lies the dilemma: men can be accused for something that isn't tangible. This doesn't disqualify the feelings of the woman, but it sure makes it hard to know how to deal with the opposite sex.

Is the same locker room humour that bonds men together completely out of order? What if one woman, who the joke is directed to, doesn't take offence but another woman does?

Does all humour have to be checked by the thought police?

What if the man feels uncomfortable? Who is going to believe him?



### RUMOUR MILLS

Shane Mills

While Oleanna provokes the viewer to think, it does a poor job of setting a realistic scenario. Most women, at least the younger ones, were frustrated with their representation on the stage. To them the questions of flaunting power to influence a woman's actions didn't strike a realistic chord. And the accusation of rape was greeted with outright derision.

And power is, without doubt, a

consideration when talking about sexual harassment and sexual assault. The case of Bishop Hubert O'Connor is a prime example. It's hard to believe that a young woman, at a Catholic residential school, can be said to offer true consent to a relationship with a Catholic priest. That's an abuse of power.

Though he's better fleshed out, the male character has his own problems – his most glaring one being his need to be a rebel and at the same time yearning for tenure at the university.

His wail of "why are you doing this to me?" struck a responsive chord because the anguish was real and all his.

But the most accurate characterization in Oleanna came from the simple phrase: "My group and I." The empty vassal, at least as crafted by David Mamet, was suddenly strong and articulate. However, were the ideas really hers? Probably not.

The nebulous 'group', who are accountable to no one, provides the impetus for a breakdown in communication.

And the key to stopping harassment is communication. Along with a healthy dose of common-sense.